

It's So Poetic; Dying Out at Sea

I took off. New Year's Eve was a bust. Sure, I got drunk. I made some memories I'll never remember. I found out who has my back and who doesn't. However, in the end, none of that matters. This is all so small. So minuscule in relation to the grand scheme of things. I had dreams and I had short-term goals. Had is the key word. They are gone, along with my self-dignity. That's why I took off.

It's very rare for a person like me to want to leave. I seek attachment in certain sorts of things. I seek embrace, and being alone for too long leaves me with my thoughts. I don't even know what I think, for I rarely even give myself the chance to do so. I guess you could say I was soul seeking. The soul I was seeking, was my own. I didn't bring anything with me, besides that quality .32 Magnum my father has never shot. Just my gun, six hollow points, and me. It all felt so right.

I didn't have time to stop at the store and get myself some tobacco. I easily could have thrown my gun in the cashier's face with a mask over mine, demanding whatever I pleased, but the karma system works both ways. Besides, I don't deal well with confrontation. Maybe later on after I ate I could peep my head in and check today's prices on my favorite brand, but somehow I feel like having a crutch like tobacco would only slow me down.

My feet started aching by the time I even made it out of town. New Year's really beat me down. I had a black eye and a hospital band to show for it, but that hardly explained what happened. I had a sort of limp going on, and surely passing cars had their heads turned. I would probably seem insane if I carried my gun instead

of holstering it in my briefs. There's something I didn't think about. Underwear. The sweats would surely get to me and ruin my garments later on, but i suppose that's just one problem I'd have to deal with later.

Every step just hurt me a little more. I could easily pick up a pay phone nearby and call an old pal for a ride back to my place, but that would defeat the purpose. Nobody would miss me in the time I was gone. I'm sure a few people began to wonder why I haven't updated my status on the internet, especially since it's been an hour since my last one. I sort of wish I brought my cell phone. In this day and age, a gun just doesn't solve all of your problems. If only I could have been someone else, in a different time. Maybe then I wouldn't even need to take off like I did. Maybe everything would be better.

Then again, wondering what things could be doesn't solve any problems, just like a gun. If I could just close my eyes and open them to new scenery with all new faces shoving friendliness down my throat, then it'd all be great. I won't speculate. I shouldn't.

It began to get dark. By now every one of my acquaintances is asleep, in their beds, dreaming of their next kiss or their next big lottery win. Me? I'm walking. I just keep walking. My brain is going a mile a minute, coming up with every possible outcome to every possible scenario. What if I see a skunk? Should I be scared? Should I just blast it in the face and laugh while patrol chalks it up to roadkill? I could, but I shouldn't. I might.

I began to see a figure in front of me, but walking at night without having my contacts in seriously degrades my vision. I should have brought my glasses, but I feel

like every sociopath in the books wore glasses. I don't just want to be another stereotype. I don't even want to kill anybody. I might.

The figure was doing exactly what I was doing; hobbling down the road adjusting his underwear. Hopefully not because he has a loaded .32 Magnum in there. I can hope. I yelled out to the darkness, hoping for an answer. Maybe I could meet a friend? Maybe he wants company. Maybe he is a she? Hopefully not both a he and a she, that could turn out weird.

Normally I would just think it was a prostitute, but it seemed like the figure had a goal. It was going somewhere, and it wasn't happy. It's funny how our brains can tell the difference between speeds. Have you ever thought about that? How we can guess an objects speed relative to our own. At what point in evolution did genetics find that to be a necessary skill?

I received no answer. Not even a glance back. The figure did pick up the pace, but my pace was faster even with a small limp. I started moving faster and faster hoping I could solve some sort of mystery. Maybe just one little story to tell people, and then I could turn around. People like my stories. I happen to have a hundred subscribers to my personal online diary, you know. Even if they are just a bunch of people I used to go to school with, I think of it as an ego boost. People do like hearing about the things I have to say. Maybe this person would agree.

I could also just blast his head off from here. BLAM! That would be a sight to see. It would be interesting too. It would be like a video game. I could ransack his belongings, maybe even use his clothes as a costume. Identity theft. I can't even believe that's a real thing. I could look through the wallet, find an address, and tell

the people at the house that Whatshisface is dead. I could hear them cry, watch them mourn. Such a weird thing, mourning is. I can't say I've ever seen an animal cry after watching its kin get ripped apart in the wild. Seems like they just flee from the scene and deal with having one less weak link. Hell, we bury our dead. Just stick 'em in the ground. That'll show them. "For everything you did to me as a child, I'm going to throw your body six feet underground so we don't have to look at your ugly face." I wonder why we don't eat our dead? That would probably save a lot of land for new apartment complexes.

It took a turn. The turn was right over the guardrail, seemingly to a wooded area. I decided I should probably follow. Who knows what hides in the wilderness. Besides, I could be given gratuities for saving its life if it came down to it. I mean, I do have a gun. I wonder how many shots a bear takes to kill? Could I even aim well enough to hit it where I need to?

I waited for a while to see if the figure would come back. Maybe he lost something out there earlier, and had to hurry to get it before anyone else did. Maybe it's making sure that person he might've killed earlier is still buried. That would be exciting. I waited a solid three minutes. One Mississippi, two Mississippi, three. I hopped over the guardrail and stuck to the tracks. I tried sniffing the dirt the figure walked on to get a scent to follow, but then I remembered I wasn't a dog. What was I thinking?

My heart began to beat a little faster. Very few times have I found myself tracking something through the woods by myself. In fact, I've never done this. Has anyone else, besides maybe Sylvester Stallone on the big screen? Actually, I'm sure a

good number of people in the wars have done it. That's what I'll compare myself to. A good citizen carrying a six-shooter through the woods for the good of my country. Who's the president again?

There were various snapping sounds, probably from branches or something. I heard a small grunt, and chose to follow it. I still hope it's a person. I kept walking, following the non-existent trail. What the hell was I doing? Some story, huh?

I probably walked for an hour. I totally lost sight of the figure. I was completely alone. Just me, the canopies, and the dirt. Probably a few animals, too, but nothing scary. The scariest thing I've ever seen in the wilderness on the East coast was a Coyote, but I shot that motherfucker on sight. We were hunting anyways. It was totally worth the five hundred dollar fine. I didn't even pay it anyways.

I came up to a small creek and chose to stick along the side of it for the rest of my walk. I had totally forgotten what direction I was going in. I tried to check moss, but I realized I dropped out of the Boy Scouts after I won the soapbox derby. I just wanted a trophy for something. I was never any good at sports, anyways. Do they even teach you what to look for on moss in the Boy Scouts? Who knows.

The creek led me to a monstrous waterfall. Hello, waterfall. Why have I never heard of this waterfall before? It's HUGE! We could have jumped off of it as kids, my friends and I. If I ever go back, I'll bring them here if I can remember where it is. I sat down, and enjoyed the calming sounds. I should have brought a tape recorder so I could record the sounds of the scenery and sell them to an alarm clock company. That would be a cool job. Hang out in the wild, find sounds to record so busy people

can sleep at night? Hell yeah. It's like being a Good Samaritan and getting paid at the same time. Does that even make you a Good Samaritan, if you're being paid? Who knows, not me.

I can't believe I didn't see this before, but there was someone with me. He had been sitting about a hundred yards away from me, sitting the same way, smoking a cigarette. Probably enjoying the waterfall. I don't smoke, but I don't mind the smell. Something about it brings back good memories about being a child. There's another thing our brains do that I find amazing. Smelling things and having it bring back memories. Amazing. I also forgot to note how cool it was that I guessed the figure is about a hundred yards away from me. However, a hundred is a pretty standard number. It could be eighty-two yards for all I know.

I raised my hand above my head in salutations, silently. It's like this is a common thing. People following people into the woods to sit on waterfalls they've never seen before to relax. Obviously, it's not. Another thing that isn't is the fact that I thought my greeting was sufficient. I clearly wasn't noticed. I began to rise to my feet, but stumbled a bit and lost my balance. My feet hung over the edge, but it was easy to grip and pull myself up. Luckily the noise from all of this caught the person's attention.

He, and I say he because he clearly was stark naked with his member fumbling about from lack of support, stood himself up. Unlike me, however, he didn't get a grip and find a way to pull himself up. He just tumbled down. Smack after smack against solid rock went his head. Slap, slap, swish. Right into the waterfall. I stepped towards the edge again to see, silent. His body came right up. No

motion. Motionless.

This would be about the time a normal person would try and call for help, but being an hour into the woods completely alone besides a dead body in the waterfall brought me to a better conclusion. I just stared. Hello dead body. Nice to see you. Float over there, and I'll buy you a drink.

I kept staring. Am I supposed to run to the road and flag down the next passing car begging for help for this dead person I haven't even met? Am I? Probably. I decided not to. I kept staring. Would you care for a side of fries with that? "Hello."

I practically jumped out of my pants and into the waterfall myself. I covered my head on instinct. What a stupid thing to do. Why would my arms protect me from anything that was going to sneak attack me? Whoever greeted me put their hand on my shoulder and told me to calm down. I mean, I was calm, but my conscience wasn't. You just blatantly sneaked up behind me and said something clearly not native to the wilderness, right after I watched a man die before my eyes. Sheesh.

"Don't be afraid, come with me." He, again I say he because he also had his male organ flopping around like a pair of elephant ears, took my hand and pulled me three yards away from where I was just standing. There it is again. Three yards.

I sort of just stood there in disbelief. Is this even real life? Am I fucking dreaming? Why are naked people falling into waterfalls and holding my hands? "Don't be afraid. This won't hurt." I made a stupid move to run, and slipped on the dirt below me. Stupid running shoes. Good for running on cement, not on slippery

dirt next to waterfalls. I fell down to my knees and stared up, right where no teenage boy wants to look. The man put his hand on my head, and let out a long, deep sigh. He stared up, then back down at me. I was too frightened to move. What the fuck. What the fuck.

He let out a small grunt. One of those grunts you hear from Hulk wannabees at your local purple and yellow painted gym, right before they put the maximum weight onto one of the lousy machines. You know that grunt. Hyaaaah!

The feeling was ecstasy. Free falling. Nothing to hold on to. Nothing holding me back. Nothing, at all. Just me, and the air. The sight of a naked man who just pushed me into a sixty-foot waterfall, but that's beside the point. I felt released. I had no other worries. Just the worry that I may not make it out alive. You know what? That's okay. I don't mind. Everyone has their chance to live. I didn't take mine. I would rather classify this as a suicide rather than a homicide. I really, truly didn't mind.

The man just stared. Arms crossed, legs in a wide stance. Totally naked. I tried to do a flip or two. Might as well make the best of things, even if you are dying. I wonder if people with terminal illnesses feel the same way?

I continued to fall for what seemed like forever. The velocity picked up, and the sounds got more intense. My hair flickered across the sky, over my eyes and back into the sky again. I let all my limbs go loose. I once heard that people who don't wear seatbelts usually live if they don't tense up in car accidents. I wonder if that applies to people who get thrown off of waterfalls into a rocky abyss? I felt like a rag doll, thrown to the side by Gepetto because he just came up with his greatest

creation. A real boy. I'm not a real boy. I'm a waste of time and effort. I'm dead.

I didn't even feel myself get slapped against the rocks. I didn't feel any pain, really. I didn't feel anything. I hope nobody buries me. It's so poetic; dying out at sea.

I can't do anything right. I can't track down someone properly, despite never being taught how, but that's despite the point. I can't even die properly. I can't even acknowledge the fact that I died in waterfall on a river, not in the sea. Here I am thinking I'm the next Kerouac, using semicolons to relate my seemingly unprecedented death to a non-existent poem. I can't even use semicolons correctly. God, my English professor would castrate me. Castrate. What does that word even mean? I use it so often.

The nurses are nice. They seem to want me to do all sorts of tricks for them. This must be what a dog feels like. Roll over. Sit down. Spin that way. Raise your hand. Tell me how many fingers I'm holding up. You'd be amazed, there are actually some dogs that can answer that question. They don't speak English, but it's really no different than asking a French fellow in an American hospital. I wonder if all dogs really do go to heaven?

I find it hard to see. Maybe I'm blind. I'm always wanted to have some sort of ailment. Something that actually requires other people to take care of me. I wonder if there are blind people who live alone? Well, there are blind people who live with dogs, but I'm done talking about dogs. I suppose if I'm blind I could use it as a ploy to get girls to sleep with me. Sleazy prostitute girls, but girls, nonetheless. Maybe one of them would fall in love with me. Some sort of reverse True Romance story. That

would be ideal.

Maybe I'm in a coma? I know it's not death; I can feel my phalanges pathetically touching themselves to make sure they're there. Even if they weren't there, touching the void where they should be certainly isn't going to bring them back. Still, I don't think a sixty foot fall would make me lose fingers, but then again here I am talking to the backs of my eyelids. Hello darkness, what fine weather we're having in this oxygen tank. I hear it might be sixty-two degrees today! What a change from the fifty-nine we had to deal with a week ago, I'm relieved. How would I even know if a week had passed if I can't open my eyes? I feel like I would definitely notice doing nothing for more than a couple of hours, but I really can't reassure myself after tumbling down a mountain because of a maniacal streaker.

If this is a coma, where is the off button? This could be a fun game. My dreams would lead me on some sort of adventure to find this magical button, then I wake up. Sounds like an excellent book idea. Fingers, write that down. I coughed. Oof! That one hurt. At least I can still feel pain. New pain, really. None of the pain from the fall. It's like it never happened. It could have never happened, I lived anyways. Nobody would believe me if I told them.

I could hear all sorts of beeps and buzzes going on. Judging by my body movements, voluntary or not, I played a little game to figure out which one meant what. The really slow beep noise that intermittently went on and off must be my heartbeat. Looks like I am alive. It's so bright. Too bright. Even behind these eyelids. I hate that. You can stand under the sun and close your eyes, but you'll still see something. The reflection of the sun off your wimpy little eyelids.

Wait a minute, my eyes aren't even closed! This doesn't change the fact that I can't see anything, but still. My eyes are most definitely open. Everything is just too blurry. At this point I almost wish I were dead. The pain is all coming back to me. I must have hit the off button.

"Good morning, son. Feeling better today, I hope."

Two people. Who? Why? I enjoyed the simplicity of talking to myself without actually talking. I'm sure nobody expected me to be anywhere. Utter simplicity. Just me, no desires to piss, no desires to eat, no desires to sleep. Just me, talking to myself. Can I have it back? I don't think I'm going to answer these people. I don't even recognize them. I hope nobody mixed up the wrong patients like they do with babies. That'd be terrible!

I wanted to rub my eyes. They hurt. They needed refocusing. If I were a camera, I'd just twist the lens and check if the view were any better. Eyes can't do that. Eyes think they're too superior for manual settings. So did that camera my mom bought me for Christmas. Twenty-nine, ninety nine this week only. Real high end stuff right there. Every future photographer's number one item on the wish list.

The thing about rubbing my eyes is that I have nothing to rub them with. Where are my hands? In fact, where am I? How far away from my house did I even get? It's cold. Mighty cold. I should be wearing pants. My legs are exposed. The little hairs on my legs are standing straight up. I don't remember a time when leg hairs could stand up if they were still in their favorite pair of knickers.

You know what else is standing up? Me. You know what else is exposed? Me. I'm naked. I can't see it, but I know it. The cold stainless steel is touching my skin,

practically shocking me. It only stings for the first second, and if you don't react to it your body adjusts quite nicely to it. Kind of like sitting on one of those ceramic toilets. Who uses those anyways? I thought we lived in a more advanced time, where people realized we don't need to sacrifice comfort so long as we have money. Just get a toilet seat cover, plop your ass on it, shit out a stuffed animal and call it a day. Maybe I'm on a toilet. I could be anywhere.

I could hear myself letting out a moan. Actually, it seemed more like a whine to me. Surely the endless moans of dying patients would not annoy anyone with any sympathy for people who should be dead. Patience. That's all you need. Finally, sight. Hello world. So nice to see you.

As I opened my beady little eyes, I noticed one thing that didn't belong. None of us had clothes on. By us, I mean these people, who I did not recognize. They all recognized me, though. Who am I?

Notes on “It’s So Poetic; Dying Out at Sea”

When I first wrote my story, it began as a stream of consciousness. I wrote it on my online blog, after a New Year’s Eve night that ended with me in the hospital. I started writing my thoughts down, which ranged obviously from happy to angry. I then read through it again, and decided that I didn’t want the online world to know exactly what happened that night, mostly because I didn’t even know myself. I then formed a story about a teen that runs away because of his awful New Year’s Eve party, and just like myself he never reveals what happens out of embarrassment.

The story switches without warning between the main character’s thoughts and his actions. I tried my best to keep dialogue almost entirely out of the story because I have learned that the less words in the story, the better it is. His thoughts in the story are mostly my own, and came from the original draft of it.

I got the idea for the protagonists to be naked because when I woke up in the hospital, I was also embarrassingly naked. The irony was that even though my own nakedness was the least of my problems, it was one of the most important things I focused on, and I tried to highlight that in the story.

Of course, I do not own a gun, but the original draft had thoughts I wrote down out of pure emotion, and I condensed the angry thoughts into a gun as a metaphor. I feel as though the gun in the story brought about a sense of safety to the character, as the worst is over and it brings good measure of protection. It also represented the spontaneity of his journey, and the feelings that came with it.

In the second draft, I had originally written more. The character went on to live in a coma, as he predicted. However, I felt that leaving the story as an open-ended question continued with the theme of curiosity killing the cat.

Almost Five Years

Five years ago today
You
 Fell
 Down
Out of the tree
Onto
 The
 Rock
Into the water
Drowned
 To
 Death
The kids all ran
I
 Was
 Scared
They jumped in
I
 Broke
 Down
Ran to get help
Waited
 For
 Police
Made a statement
Drove
 To The
 Station
Answered the Questions
Walked
 Out
 Side
Got a phone call
Confirmed
 Your
 Death
Started to cry
All
 My
 Fault

Notes on “Almost Five Years”

I submitted this poem in my poetry portfolio, and submitted it in my final portfolio because I feel like it's one of my best works. I edited a couple of spelling errors, and reformatted it so that it kept a continuous pattern. It was originally supposed to be formatted this way, because the words that are in a descending format are the key phrases that have to do with the event.

“You Fell Down” was obviously the most important event, because without him falling down, out of the tree, I would still have a good friend.

“Onto the rock” holds significance because a great deal of the time spent with my friend in the ER was debating whether or not it was a drowning, or the hit on the rock that caused his death.

“Drowned to death” compliments the last significant phrase because we eventually did learn, at the wake, that it was the drowning that ultimately killed him.

“I was scared” is, to me, the most important line. If I hadn't been scared, and used my inner courage to jump when I witnessed the event, it is likely that I would have jumped in immediately and could have possibly saved the situation. Of course, after five years I have learned to stop feeling guilty.

“I broke down” is important because it's the first moment in my life I felt completely out of control of the things going on around me. In most situations, I usually portray myself as calm and collected. Not on this day.

“Waited for police” is special because of the length of time it took for the authorities to bring help. I said “police” instead of “help” because the ambulances and firefighters didn't show up until the police already did and started interrogating us, rather than saving my friend.

“Drove to the station” is a line that is ironically short to the amount of time that trip felt like it took. Nobody had an idea of whether or not my friend was found, alive, dead, or anything else. My dad had driven me, and despite his anger for me going against his wishes, he didn't lash out and yell at me. He stayed silent, and so did I.

“Walked out side” is relating to me walking out of the police station after a ruthless interrogation about drugs and alcohol that weren't involved, and being greeted by news reporters begging for an interview. The reporter asked if I wanted to be on TV, and that question will stick with me for the rest of my life because of her ignorance.

“Confirmed your death” is important because after I was rudely questioned by the reporter, my father received a phone call from my friend's mother saying that he was pronounced deceased. I didn't cry, and I didn't feel anything. I just turned around and walked.

“All my fault” is and was the hardest line to write. For the last five years I've spent every May at the quarries replaying the events in my head, telling myself it was my fault. Writing it down helped me realize how untrue it really was.

Take This, Take That

Take this,
Your lips will do flips.
Take that,
Your body so flat.
Take this,
Won't you please just sit still?
Take that,
A tiny little pill.

There are the children,
Innocent and robbed,
Raped of the mind.
We've lost ourselves,
Will you help me find?

Take this,
You'll lose all your pain.
Take that,
Inevitably deranged.

Are you depressed?
This will do you best.

I long, my reader,
To let you know,
At long last this ease,
Will become your disease.

How will you lose this?
How will you ditch that?
Will your mind ever be free?
I sit in awe and laugh at the thought
Of a million kids
In a global detoxification
As their minds do rot.

I fear the days,
That lie ahead,
With minds of dead.

Take this,
It will help you now.
Take that,
Your mind will die fast.

Notes on “Take This, Take That”

Take This, Take That came to me after a long period of watching movies with my brother, and seeing his friends that entered and exited throughout his life. I had never associated with anyone with serious drug addiction, but my brother had. Some of his friends were in and out of rehab for pill over dosage, and various other things. I’ve been told this is my most powerful poem.

Although spoken on a greater level than just my brother’s friends, I feel as though the poem in more ways than not, speaks the truth about addiction. The ease of feeling high from a good drug eventually and essentially consumes a person and defines who they are, becoming horribly similar to a disease.

My favorite line is my laughing at the world, and their “global detoxification” from drugs. In my own opinion, I find it strange that people allow themselves to become slaves to addiction, while I continue on with my life away from the horrible classification of people they slip into.

As stated in the poem, I do fear the future and what it holds, because of the growing abuse of drugs in people my own age.

The Tenth Month

Nine months of my life
Spent worrying about you
But here I am the gum under your shoes
Sweep me in, under your rug
Crush my back like a worthless bug
Never good enough
I gave up on you

Better things came
And pulled you away from me
Like the leaves before the start of spring
My smile got lost, in someone else
Your lack of fulfillment was actually your drug
Never good enough
You gave up on me

I had twenty dollars
Tucked beneath my socks
Said I had ten cause I knew I'd be robbed
Everything you did, required something from me
I had no money, so what good could you see?
Never good enough
I gave up on you

Talk to your friends
Cameron is a weirdo
Looks good in pictures but he puts on quite a show
A puppet master, the king of strings
You saw me in actions, but never in things
Never good enough
You gave up on me

You think you're the first
That I said this to?
Call me the keeper, cause I run this whole zoo
There are few far between us
I am bitter and you're not the sweetest
Never good enough
I gave up on you

Sleepless nights
Wondering if you were thinking about me
Seeing as much as a blind man
I forgot who you are

Notes on “The Tenth Month”

This poem began as an improve rap I did outside of a show my friend’s band played at, one month after the inconclusive end of my heart breaking breakup. I sat outside as some friends began beatboxing to each other and making up a song, and thought of words to say about the only thing on my mind, which happened to be her. I also had gum stuck under my shoes, which provided a line or two to rap off of.

Between feeling lonely around all of my friends, and being bitter about my relationship, I had a lot to say. When I went home to write it down, I came up with almost double the lines I originally had. The entire second half is what I wrote behind closed doors, and it allowed me to be much more bitter on the subject.

Once I had finally written it all down, I felt insanely relieved, and the final four lines that stray from the rhyme scheme and pattern came in the final draft. I had taken time to go through old pictures and documents from the relationship, and eventually decided that she no longer infatuated me. I remembered why the break up happened, and how she made me feel. I became obsessed with more how she made me feel in the poem, than who she was. The fact that I couldn’t even define her as a person anymore by choice words helped me forget her, through poetry.

My writing is an excellent depiction of myself, I have learned. That is the most important thing. I've learned that I, as a writer, cannot fully imitate another person, and be that person. It's hard for me to become a character I am writing about, which is why for the most part; I give up on a lot of projects. However, it's not entirely a bad thing, which I have also learned.

In my writing, putting my emotions, my actions, my thoughts, and my reactions in has proven to define some of my strongest pieces. My favorite fiction, "It's So Poetic; Dying Out at Sea" that I wrote is almost entirely about me, without actually being about me. Every other character in the story is nameless, emotionless, and essentially useless to the story. I've realized that if I remove the characters from any of my developed stories, the story is still exactly the same, just a little bit lonelier.

My poems also reflect me. Each poem I've written, whether about tragedy, love, or politics provides a decently in depth look at how I truly feel on the subject. Even though I try out different poetic styles, they all return to using patterns and speaking for me in an entertaining way, just as I do outside of poetry.

My work is extremely personal, to a degree where I most likely wouldn't share them out loud unless I was paid to do it. I'm proud of it, and I like to keep it to myself. The best part about my work is when I become frustrated and without attention, I can turn to it for a boost of confidence. I've never received a bad comment about any of my pieces, which allows me to take my proudest works and essentially keep them to only myself.

Over the years, I've kept one idea in mind that I have always wished to develop into a story of sorts. I wrote a screenplay for it, for a five-minute movie competition, but

did not have the resources to complete it. It remains as an unfinished work. I hope to one day turn it into a feature length movie screenplay, or my first novel. It's the story of a town called Mattoon, in Pennsylvania during the 1930s. 5 characters, each with rare, but very present undiagnosed mental disorders, become preemptive and paranoid about supposed "gassings" happening around the area by a mysterious criminal, called the Mad Gasser of Mattoon. The people's mental disorders slowly become worse and worse, leading to their untimely demises because of the paranoia, only to find out that the Mad Gasser never existed and it was a false report filed by another mentally ill citizen of the town. I based the idea off of an actual event I read about in a book of urban legends.

I've learned a lot about my own writing habits. Often times I begin to sit down and write, but never know what to say. Sometimes I never know how much I actually want to let out. I've also learned that even though I am told I have a talent for fiction writing, I lack in ability to finish a project. If I had an alternate outlet for my feelings, I might find it easier to write about more fictional things.

I've never felt fully included in any sort of writing community. The closest thing I had to a writing community besides this class was my creative writing class I took in high school. In high school, all the students knew each other personally, which really helped everyone be more open to sharing and critiquing others' works, which doesn't exactly happen in university. However, I do run a blog on Tumblr.com, and on it I have 170 "followers" which are all subscribed to my work and are updated whenever I post. The followers often "like" or "reblog" my original things, which make me feel included and liked in the Internet community I'm a part of. In this class, I only received two comments on my work, on the same piece.

When critiquing other students' work, the first thing I learned is to avoid being critical on other people's grammar. I had to read a lot of the other students' pieces, and not all of them had perfect spelling or even close to perfect grammar. I learned that if I ignore it, then I could be critical on what actually matters – the content. Most of the critiques I received came with grammar edits, and for the most part I ignored them because how they saw it was different from how I wanted it, correct or not.

The most important thing I took away from this course was the positive reactions I received on my portfolios. I put my best efforts into each one, and I received grades to be proud of, which motivates me to continue how I am rather than change entirely. The pieces in my portfolio are what I think are my strongest ones, and if unanimously agreed on, it will push me to conclude and branch off of those styles.

I plan to continue writing just as I have, with some material for myself, some for my online blog, and most importantly, some for my education. All three are especially important to me, and where all of my focus goes when I write.

Final Portfolio

Creative Writing
Fall 2011

Cameron Little
12/1/11